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C O N F I D E N T I A L GENEVA 000993

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [EU](#) [UNHRC](#) [EC](#)
SUBJECT: CZECH GENEVA PERMREP ON HUMAN RIGHTS GOALS DURING
EU PRESIDENCY

REF: GENEVA

Classified By: DCM Mark C. Storella for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: During its EU presidency, the Czech Mission will try to hold the EU to hard red lines on Middle East and freedom of expression issues for the Durban Review Conference outcome document. Absent an EU consensus, the Czechs would consider not participating if offensive language remains. The Czechs do not yet have any specific plans to press immediate review of the Human Rights Council. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Czech PermRep Tomas Husak told DCM November 18 that dealing effectively with the Durban Review Conference would be a priority for the Czech EU presidency beginning January 1. Husak expressed concern that the preparations for an outcome document had gone in a bad direction, particularly in terms of an unbalanced focus on Palestinian-Israeli issues and bad language on freedom of expression and "religious defamation." Husak wanted to hold EU states to firm red lines, but expected that many EU member states would make their red lines "elastic." The Czech Republic is close to the UK on the issue (see RefTel) and would consider not participating in the RevCon if the document seemed too offensive and there was no EU consensus. He personally (please protect) hoped the efforts slated for January to rationalize the existing text failed so that the choice would be easier. He believed some other EU states might consider not participating if offensive language remained, but declined to say which ones.

¶3. (C) We noted the President's call for an immediate review of the Human rights Council and urged the Czech presidency to get the ball rolling within the EU. Husak said the Czech EU presidency would want to work to make the Human Rights Council more effective, but that the Czechs had no specific plans regarding Council reform at this stage. DCM urged that the EU consider ways to advance early Council reform and noted that improvements in the Council's performance would be the best way to ensure that the U.S. would be able to play a bigger role.

¶4. (C) Husak said that, in general, Prague planned to make economic issues and European competitiveness the main themes of its EU presidency. The Czechs would let France continue to take the lead on some issues that France had championed during its presidency, including the Mediterranean Alliance. He noted that his own staff would be more than doubled from 18 to 22 members to support all the organizational burdens his mission would face in Geneva as EU president.

¶5. (C) Comment: The Czech mission has not been very active on human rights issues in Geneva. While PermRep Husak is personally dedicated to human rights principles, his mission does not yet seem well organized to advance an effective

human rights agenda during its EU presidency. End Comment.
TICHENOR